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[*on a proposal considered in plenary meeting (E/2014/L.28)*]

2014/29. Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,[2] adopted by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011, and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Programme of Action,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of overcoming the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve the internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Recalling its resolution 2013/46 of 26 July 2013 on the Istanbul Programme of Action,

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions 68/18 of 4 December 2013 and 68/224 of 20 December 2013,

Emphasizing the need for coordinated implementation and coherent follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and noting the key role of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in this regard, as set out in paragraph 155 of the Programme of Action,

Recognizing that, over the years, the responsibilities of the Office of the High Representative have increased considerably in their scope and complexity,

Noting the theme of the 2014 annual ministerial review, "Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

[1] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.

[2] Ibid., chap. II.

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and for sustaining development gains in the future", and the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and charting the way for an ambitious post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals",

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020;[3]

2. *Reaffirms* the commitment, made by the international community in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,[4] to assist the least developed countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development, and also reaffirms the agreement to effectively implement the Istanbul Programme of Action[2] and to fully integrate its priority areas into the framework for action contained in the outcome document, the broader implementation of which will contribute to the overarching goal of the Programme of Action of enabling half the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020;

3. *Reaffirms* that building a critical mass of viable and competitive productive capacity in agriculture, manufacturing and services is essential if the least developed countries are to benefit from greater integration into the global economy, increase their resilience to shocks, sustain inclusive and equitable growth and eradicate poverty, achieve structural transformation and generate full and productive employment and decent work for all;

4. *Recognizes* that the least developed countries have made some progress on many of the goals and targets in the Istanbul Programme of Action, leading to structural change in a few of them, expresses its concern that most least developed countries continue to face pervasive poverty, serious structural impediments to growth, low levels of human development, inequality and high exposure to shocks and disasters, and also expresses its concern that the challenges presented by the global economic environment are putting at risk the hard-won gains achieved so far and the ability to expand those gains to all least developed countries;

5. *Welcomes* the progress made by many least developed countries in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, including by mainstreaming it into relevant planning documents and development strategies, calls upon the least developed countries, with the support of their development partners, to fulfil their commitments and to promote implementation of the Programme of Action, including by integrating its provisions into their national policies and development frameworks and conducting regular reviews with the full involvement of all key stakeholders, and in this regard invites the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, including United Nations regional and functional commissions, the United Nations resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams to actively support the integration and implementation of the Programme of Action;

6. *Also welcomes* the progress in, and stresses the importance of, mainstreaming the Istanbul Programme of Action into the development cooperation

[3] A/69/95-E/2014/81.

[4] General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

frameworks of development partners, and calls upon the development partners to further integrate the Programme of Action into their respective national cooperation policy frameworks, programmes and activities, as appropriate, to ensure enhanced, predictable and targeted support to the least developed countries, as set out in the Programme of Action, and the delivery of their commitments, and to consider appropriate measures to overcome shortfalls or shortcomings, if any;

7. *Invites* all organizations of the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and international and regional financial institutions, to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, including by implementing enhanced substantive and technical assistance to the least developed countries in a timely manner, and to integrate the Programme of Action into their programmes of work, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates, and to participate fully in its review at the national, subregional, regional and global levels, and in this regard invites them to report on their contribution to the implementation of the Programme of Action as part of their annual reporting to their respective governing bodies;

8. *Welcomes* the fact that the bilateral net official development assistance to the least developed countries is estimated to have increased by 12.3 per cent in 2013, according to the preliminary estimate of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, while noting a 9.4 per cent decrease in real terms in 2012, reiterates that official development assistance continues to be the largest source of external financing for the development of the least developed countries and plays an important role in their development and that progress has been made during the past decade in increasing the flow of official development assistance to the least developed countries, underlines that the fulfilment of all official development assistance commitments is crucial, including the commitments by many developed countries to achieving the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to developing countries by 2015, as well as the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, and urges developed countries that have not yet done so to fulfil their commitments for official development assistance to the least developed countries;

9. *Also welcomes* steps to improve the effectiveness and quality of aid in the least developed countries, and underlines the need for enhancing the quality of aid to the least developed countries by strengthening national ownership, alignment, harmonization, predictability, mutual accountability and transparency, and results orientation;

10. *Recalls* the commitment, contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action, that donor countries should review their official development assistance commitments in 2015 and consider further enhancing the resources for the least developed countries, and in this regard urges donor countries to give high priority to the least developed countries in terms of their allocation of official development assistance, taking into account their needs, complex challenges and resources gap;

11. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other actors to further intensify their efforts to fully and effectively implement, in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner, the commitments that have been made in the Istanbul Programme of Action in its eight priority areas, namely, (*a*) productive capacity, (*b*) agriculture, food security and rural development, (*c*) trade, (*d*) commodities, (*e*) human and social development,

(*f*) multiple crises and other emerging challenges, (*g*) mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building, and (*h*) good governance at all levels;

12. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, in cooperation with their development partners, to broaden their existing country review mechanisms, including those for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the implementation of poverty reduction strategy papers, common country assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, and the existing consultative mechanisms to cover the review of the Istanbul Programme of Action;

13. *Calls upon* the developing countries, guided by the spirit of solidarity and consistent with their capabilities, to provide support for the effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in mutually agreed areas of cooperation within the framework of South-South cooperation, which is a complement to, but not a substitute for, North-South cooperation;

14. *Invites* the private sector, civil society and foundations to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in their respective areas of competence in line with the national priorities of the least developed countries;

15. *Welcomes with appreciation* the decisions taken by various entities of the United Nations system to mainstream the Istanbul Programme of Action and integrate its relevant provisions into their programmes of work, and in this regard reiterates its invitation to the governing bodies of all other United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to do the same in an expeditious manner, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates;

16. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to include the issues of concern to the least developed countries in all relevant reports in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, in order to support the implementation of the goals set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

17. *Underlines* the need to give particular attention to the issues and concerns of the least developed countries in all major United Nations conferences and processes;

18. *Recalls* the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/224 to the Secretary-General to constitute a high-level panel of experts to carry out a feasibility study on a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to the least developed countries, with secretariat support provided by the Office of the High Representative, in order to examine its scope, functions, institutional linkage with the United Nations and organizational aspects, and requests the Secretary-General to constitute the panel at the earliest possible date, to facilitate the conclusion of its work within the time frame and to transmit its report and recommendations to the Assembly for its consideration, with a view to operationalizing the technology bank during the seventieth session of the Assembly, if so recommended by the panel;

19. *Underlines* the need to ensure the mutual accountability of the least developed countries and their development partners for delivering the commitments undertaken under the Istanbul Programme of Action, reiterates that the Development Cooperation Forum should continue to take into consideration the Programme of Action when it reviews the trends in international development cooperation, as well as policy coherence for development, and stresses the need for providing appropriate space and platforms for structured dialogue between the least developed countries and their development partners;

20. , *Reaffirms* its decision to include in its annual ministerial review, in 2015, a review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, invites the organizations of the United Nations system, including the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, the regional commissions, the functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies and follow-up mechanisms, as well as regional development banks, to contribute to the review of progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the Programme of Action and to contribute substantively to the discussions and decisions of the Council on the specific priorities of the least developed countries in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to submit a programme to the Council for its consideration at its 2015 session;

21. *Expresses its concern* that, although the least developed countries have made some progress in social and human development, including in primary school enrolment and gender parity in primary education, many of the goals and targets of the Millennium Development Goals have yet to be achieved, and calls upon the international community to give special priority to the least developed countries in order to accelerate the progress in attaining the Goals in the least developed countries by 2015;

22. *Recalls* the decision of the General Assembly in paragraph 24 of its resolution 68/224 that the special needs and development priorities of the least developed countries, including the eight priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action, such as productive-capacity-building, including through rapid development of infrastructure and energy, should be given appropriate consideration in the processes devoted to the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

23. *Notes* the biennial reviews of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action undertaken by the relevant United Nations regional commissions in 2013, and invites them to continue to carry out such reviews in close coordination with the global-level and country-level follow-up processes and in cooperation with subregional and regional development banks and intergovernmental organizations;

24. *Notes with appreciation* that several least developed countries have expressed their intention to reach the status of graduation by 2020, invites them to start the preparations for their graduation and transition strategy, and requests all relevant entities of the United Nations system, in particular the Office of the High Representative, to extend the necessary support in this regard;

25. *Recognizes* that the activities relating to the least developed countries carried out within the Secretariat need to be further coordinated and consolidated in order to ensure effective monitoring of and follow-up to the Istanbul Programme of Action led by the Office of the High Representative and to provide well-coordinated support for realizing the goal of enabling half of the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020;

26. *Strongly encourages* Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute in a timely manner to the Trust Fund in support of the activities undertaken by the Office of the High Representative to support the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the participation of representatives of the least developed countries in the annual review meeting on the implementation of the Programme of Action, held by the Council, as well as in other relevant forums, and

in this regard expresses its appreciation to those countries that have made voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund;

27. *Welcomes* the offer of the Government of Benin to host a ministerial conference on new partnerships for productive-capacity-building in the least developed countries, which will be held in Cotonou from 28 to 31 July 2014, and looks forward to its successful outcome;

28. *Invites* the General Assembly to consider conducting a comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in accordance with the Programme of Action, encourages the Assembly to take a decision at its sixty-ninth session, and in this regard notes with appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Turkey to host a midterm review meeting;

29. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Council at its substantive session of 2015, under the sub-item entitled "Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020" of the item entitled "Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits", a progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

47th plenary meeting
25 July 2014